

# Statement on Anti-racism, Anti-bias, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## AJEDI Preamble: Defining our Terms

This preamble introduces the Friends Committee on National Legislation's 2022 Statement on Anti-racism, Anti-bias, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (AJEDI). By sharing a common understanding of the principles, we strengthen our commitment to this work. Friends also recommend using the word integrity instead of inclusion for the "I" in AJEDI. Integrity is central to our faithful work as a Quaker organization. It reminds us that our actions must match our values, and that true inclusion is already reflected in the other principles.

**Anti-racism-** FCNL knows that many systems in the United States and the world were built on racist beliefs and practices. These systems shape all of our lives today. We understand that both supporting racism and doing nothing to challenge it cause harm. FCNL promises to look at how our policies, practices, and culture impact everyone connected to our work. We aim to change how these systems give unfair advantages or disadvantages based on how our society has defined and given value to race.

**Anti-bias-** FCNL acknowledges that many systems favor some groups over others in an unfair way. We know that both supporting bias and doing nothing to challenge it are harmful. FCNL promises to challenge stereotypes and injustice and to value and respect differences in people and groups.

**Justice-** FCNL believes that all people and living things carry that of God within them. Our faith calls us to create conditions that allow all beings to prosper and live in right relationship with each other and with the earth. We commit to stopping cycles of oppression or harm that challenge this basic right and to repairing past injustices.

**Equity-** FCNL understands that power and resources have not been shared fairly, past or present. We commit to implementing policies, procedures, and practices that remove barriers that prevent some groups from participating fully and that address the unfair advantages given to other groups. We are working toward an FCNL community where all voices are valued, and everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

**Diversity-** FCNL commits to building a community that reflects the diversity of the nation and the world we serve. Throughout our community, leadership, and structures, we will move towards having a wider range of identities and experiences included.

**Integrity-** Integrity is a central Quaker value. It calls us to make sure our actions match our stated values. For FCNL, integrity means living out AJEDI principles in all parts of our work and community.

The following documents show FCNL's commitment to being open and accountable. They list each calendar year's policies, practices, and efforts to live into each of the above terms.

- 2023-2024 FCNL AJEDI Work (link to come)
  - [\*FCNL's Strategic plan 2024-2028\*](#) includes 'Bold Step 4: Foster beloved community by integrating anti-racism, anti-bias, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout all our efforts.
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## AJEDI Statement

As a Quaker organization, FCNL endeavors to embody the belief in the inherent dignity and equal worth of each person, and in each person's unique access to the Divine. FCNL's staff, leadership, and governance bodies are committed to ongoing transformation as we work to bring into being the world we seek.

In seeking a society with equity and justice for all, where every person's potential may be fulfilled, FCNL recognizes our shared responsibility to redress the United States' long history of slavery, genocide, discrimination, and oppression and their ongoing consequences. We are working to create the type of "beloved community" described by author and social activist bell hooks as being "formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world."

Through our internal systems and practices as well as our lobbying and other activities, FCNL intends to identify, expose, and eliminate white supremacy, patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of oppression and discrimination. FCNL must actively challenge the laws, systems, mindsets, policies, and practices that lead to institutionalized racism and injustice to avoid being complicit in it.

While acknowledging these responsibilities, FCNL has not always lived up to our aspirations, internally and externally. As an organization, FCNL has caused members of our community to feel marginalized and excluded because of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, faith, age, ability, or lack of status. FCNL has overlooked the needs of people in our community, remained ignorant of their perspectives, and diminished their contributions to our work. Such harms must not be tolerated, and for these wrongs, we heartfully apologize.

To remedy past wrongs and build a just and equitable future, FCNL commits to treating anti-racism, anti-bias, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion as central pillars of our work. We recognize not only the moral imperative but also the practical value of incorporating the voices and visions of people from a wide variety of backgrounds and with a broad range of lived experiences, particularly those who have been historically discriminated against or oppressed.

Through our recruitment practices for staff and governors, outreach to community members, professional development opportunities, advocacy programs, and lobbying efforts, FCNL seeks to build an organization that reflects and includes the diversity of the United States. We will continue our internal and external work to understand the reasons why some doors remain closed to certain segments of the population and find ways to open them. We commit to identifying, exposing, and eliminating systems of oppression and discrimination within our own operations as well as in the policies for which we advocate.

FCNL welcomes, values, and respects the needs, perspectives, and contributions of all people who hold a stake in our work and witness. We embrace the importance of deepening our partnerships with organizations leading the fight against systemic racism and injustice and ensuring we are listening to and led by those most impacted by the policies we seek to change. We see it as a priority to address the ways that racism shows up in our community and our systems and to confront it with courage and determination.

To hold ourselves accountable to these commitments, we are developing clear, ambitious, and meaningful goals, establishing systems for reporting and responding to instances of harm, and identifying procedures for measuring progress.

We affirm that our ongoing process of becoming the beloved community that we seek is a reflection of our Quaker values and helps hasten the world we seek.

*Approved as a living document by the FCNL and FCNL Executive Committee on May 21, 2022.*